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Thus it will be seen that, had it not been for the resolution on the part of the Professors, that a school of music which had done so much in the past, and was likely to do so much in the future, should not be allowed to die without a vigorous struggle, the Academy would long ere this have closed its doors. Left to its fate by the Government, it now appeals for an annual grant to the public. More confidently is this appeal made since it is notorious that the Professors can have no interest in its maintenance save that of love of art. Earnestly then do we exhort all who desire that a National School of Music shall continue to exist in this country, to assist in the good work. The press, with one voice, has protested against the idea of "cheap musical instruction," under the tender fostering of the "Department of Science and Art;" and if in spite of this protest, the scheme be persevered in, it is absolutely necessary that a determined stand should be made against it. Music is too tender a flower to be entrusted to any but those whose loving care can appreciate and develop its manifold beauties; and although the rough handling of those who would snatch it from its legitimate guardians may not be at first apparent, there can be little doubt that, slowly but surely, it will wither and die, despite the official remedies applied under the "direct control of Government."

If reading and writing were, as Dogberry says, to come by nature, there is no doubt that, like all other things which come to us in the same easy manner, we should accept the gift without much thought, and make no particular boast of it. But, unfortunately, as all schoolboys are fully aware, these important accomplishments are acquired with much difficulty: we have to learn letters, and advance through a gradual multiplication of syllables to long words, before we can read a book with any pleasure; to make strokes, pothooks and hangers, and do copies in round, middling, and small hand, before we can write with freedom; and this it is which raises the man who has mastered these difficulties higher in the social scale than he who has not. Time was when the power of reading and writing was somewhat rare; and even many of those exclusive aristocrats who possessed these accomplishments would scarcely, in these days, successfully pass a Civil Service Examination. Now, however, education is all but universal; and to ask any person whether he can read and write would be considered almost an insult. This is, of course, as it should be; but it is an old adage that almost every good is accompanied with an evil. We have nothing whatever to say against the power of reading; nor indeed should we have against that of writing, were it more limited in its application to the necessities of the daily routine of life. But when the common-place thoughts of common-place men are to be set up in enduring type; and these mere scribblers are to consider themselves ill-used, because reviewers will not admit them into the temple of literature, this "fatal facility" of writing becomes a positive nuisance; and we almost begin to wish that we had been born in the time when scholarly and gifted men ruled the world of thought; and people only wrote when they had something to say.

In music we seem to be gradually approaching the same unfortunate crisis. In the days when young ladies only occasionally studied music as an accomplishment, the "pianist" in a little social party was

considered a lioness; and the rest of the company sat to hear her performance in silent wonder that she could play with both hands at the same time, and different notes with each. But who, even amongst the most aspiring of these artists, ever thought of attempting to understand the grammar of the language in which she was speaking to her audience? True, there was a certain number of learned "Doctors" in the science who were supposed to comprehend the extraordinary figures and other cabalistic signs by which the chords in music were denoted; but the wigs of these formidable "mystery men" were enough in themselves to prevent any timid pupil from endeavouring to hold any communion with them on the abstruse secrets of the science they professed. True, also, it was that something called "Thorough Bass" represented this wonderfully difficult subject upon paper; and hence it might be supposed that, without entering the mighty magician's formidable studio, it would be possible for a student to teach herself some of the rudiments of the science; but when books were procured, there was such a fearful array of figures, crosses, lines distorted into all sorts of curves, hands pointing to every part of the page, triangles, circles and squares, that the unfortunate victim of fatal curiosity, like Fatima, in *Blue Beard*, after she had opened the door of the secret chamber, immediately regretted her indiscretion, and fled from the horrors which met her gaze, never more to return. As practical music gradually advanced, however, it became impossible for this general ignorance on the theory of the art to continue. Popular works on harmony, therefore, began to appear; and it became the custom with the majority of musical students to gain a knowledge of the principal chords, and also of the method of spreading them out for voices and instruments, without violating the rules laid down by the principal theoretical authorities. But with this power of writing music (as in the instance, already given, of writing language), came the desire for producing "compositions," the greater number of which, of course (like the "themes" written at school), were merely a series of platitudes, which should have been thrown in the fire, with all other exercises done in the days of studentship, when they had served the purpose for which they were intended.

Whatever may be the consequences of this over-productiveness on the art itself, there can be no question that the majority of the music-loving public can protect themselves against the evil effects of the system, by simply purchasing what they want, and passing over what they don't want. But, alas for the poor reviewer! Who pities him when the avalanche of "recent musical compositions" sweeps down upon his devoted head and almost crushes him beneath its weight? Who knows or cares about the struggles and difficulties he has to encounter in preserving for himself (spite of all obstructions) a clear and straightforward path from which he has resolved never to deviate? It is a fact, we are almost inclined to believe, from experience, that everybody who can throw down a few chords correctly thinks it necessary to appear in print; and, consequently, between the compositions issued by the publishers on their own account, and those published on the account of the author, the amount of pure white paper annually spoilt is perfectly marvellous.

From these productions, we need scarcely say it is a thankless task for the reviewer to make a selection;

for, although so many are beneath criticism, it is impossible, in the limited space provided for reviews, to state the reasons for their being so; and the only alternative, therefore, is to say nothing about them. Our readers, for instance, would be surprised were we to tell them the names of one half of the compositions forwarded to us, which are neither more nor less than gross plagiarisms; not merely containing here and there passages which come to us as old and valued friends, but being almost literally a copy of a previous song or piece already well known. Then, the inane ballads—many of them, by the way, not one bit worse than some preserved from contempt by the “royalty” system—are multiplied to such an extent that we almost begin to wonder how, if all these things are bought, good music can sell at all. Next in the list come the ambitious attempts of those who will not rest contented with maudlin trifles; but who having heard that “Beethoven wasn’t understood at first,” dash off with a heterogeneous mass of chords and mysterious passages, the whole forming a wild and disconnected piece, which they usually christen with a romantic title, believing that they are destined to show the deeply philosophical aim of music, and carry on the art where the great German composers have left it. In sacred works, it is evidently not considered necessary to have any original ideas at all; a dry succession of chords that will fit some religious words being thought sufficient for the purpose, provided the officious critics cannot discover any very glaring defects in musical grammar.

We could swell this catalogue of crudities to a much greater extent; but have already mentioned enough to show how onerous is the duty of a reviewer. If, from motives of kindness, he passes over these works, he is declared to be unjust and partial; if he notices them and exposes their weakness, he is termed bitter, and ungenerous to rising composers. One course only, therefore, is open—he must be true to art; and regard all compositions before him as having an abstract bearing upon its progress. Thus, a bad work by a known composer may remain unnoticed, whilst a good work by an unknown composer, may be reviewed at length. In pursuing this system, he will at least have the satisfaction of feeling that he is doing his duty according to the best of his ability; and although it may be too much to expect that a composer will like to be passed over in the crowd, it is perhaps, after all, better than being seized by the collar and publicly abused.

CONCERTS ANCIENT AND MODERN.

THE first of a series of Concerts under the above title was given at St. James’s Hall on the 1st ult., when Handel’s *Alexander’s Feast*, and Beethoven’s *Ruins of Athens* were performed. With a large chorus and excellent orchestra, the music should have gone better; but either through insufficiency of rehearsals, or want of intimacy with the forces under his command, Herr Schachner, the conductor, appeared scarcely able to exact that implicit obedience so essential to success. Practice, however, may remedy this; but we must dissent from the times in which he took several of the pieces; the “Dervish Chorus” in the *Ruins of Athens*, especially, being sung so slowly as to deprive it of its true character. Mr. W. H. Cummings sustained the trying tenor part in *Alexander’s Feast* extremely well, Madlle. Sinico battled with the music

of Handel as well as anyone trained as an Italian operatic singer could be expected to do; and the same may be said of Signor Foli. An agreeable relief was afforded by a performance of Mendelssohn’s *Capriccio* (Op. 22) by Madame Arabella Goddard, and an excellent rendering, by Madlle Titens, of the *scena* from *Der Freyschütz*.

MR. HENRY LESLIE’S CONCERTS.

THE eleventh Concert of the series was highly attractive to all who admire genuine unaccompanied choral music, several madrigals, including “Sweet honey-sucking Bees,” “My bonny Lass,” &c., being most agreeably mixed with compositions of the modern school. Mr. Sims Reeves and Mr. Santley were the principal vocalists; and a clever pianist, Mr. Frederick H. Cowen, made a highly favourable impression in a piece by Henselt, Liszt’s “Erl King,” and Chopin’s Ballade in G minor. The twelfth Concert was orchestral, and included Mendelssohn’s Italian Symphony and Beethoven’s Choral Fantasia, the pianoforte part being ably played by Madlle. Mehlig. Amongst the choral music was the fine “Hymn to Bacchus,” from *Antigone*, and a selection from *Edipus*. The solo vocalist was Miss Kellogg. A very excellent Concert was given on the 20th ult., for the Director’s benefit, Madlle. Titens and Mr. Santley being the principal singers, and Mendelssohn’s *Reformation Symphony* forming the chief orchestral feature in the programme.

CRYSTAL PALACE.

THE new season at this establishment opened on Saturday, the 2nd ult., with a musical performance of the utmost interest. The Concert took place in the Handel Orchestra, and commenced with Mendelssohn’s *Reformation Symphony*, which it is scarcely necessary to say, was played most magnificently, and received with the warmest demonstrations of pleasure by the vast audience. Mendelssohn’s *Edipus in Colonus* was the next important feature in the programme; and the effect of a trained choir, consisting of a thousand male voices, created a profound sensation; the noble choruses “Thou comest to the land,” “Ah, were I on yonder plain,” and “When the health and the strength are gone” developing the varied powers of this great choral body to the utmost advantage. The work was thoroughly appreciated by the audience; and the thanks of all lovers of real art are due to Mr. Manns (who conducted the performance), and to all concerned in the undertaking, for presenting this fine composition in so perfect a manner. The rest of the programme was composed of miscellaneous vocal music, the singers being Madlle. Kellogg, Madlle. Sinico, Madame Trebelli-Bettini, Signori Fraschini, Foli, and Gassier.

HER MAJESTY’S OPERA.

THE *début* of Signor Ferensi in the trying part of *Raoul*, in the *Huguenots*, has been an important event in the chronicle of the month at this house; and although he scarcely succeeded in convincing his hearers that his powers were equal to the task he had imposed upon himself, he proved that he had very many of the requisites of a sound vocalist; and it is possible that in other parts these qualifications may be more prominently and successfully displayed. Signor Mongini is a valuable addition to the company; and Madlle. Kellogg appears to have thoroughly ingratiated herself with the audience, her performance of *Ninetta*, in *La Gazza Ladra*, (a character which we hear was quite strange to her) having been especially well received, in addition to her impersonation of the parts already established in public favour. The production of *Don Giovanni* has proved a great success: the union of three such vocalists as Madlle. Titens, Madlle. Kellogg, and Madlle. Nilsson being in our modern operatic casts almost unprecedented.